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Transfaires d'empire

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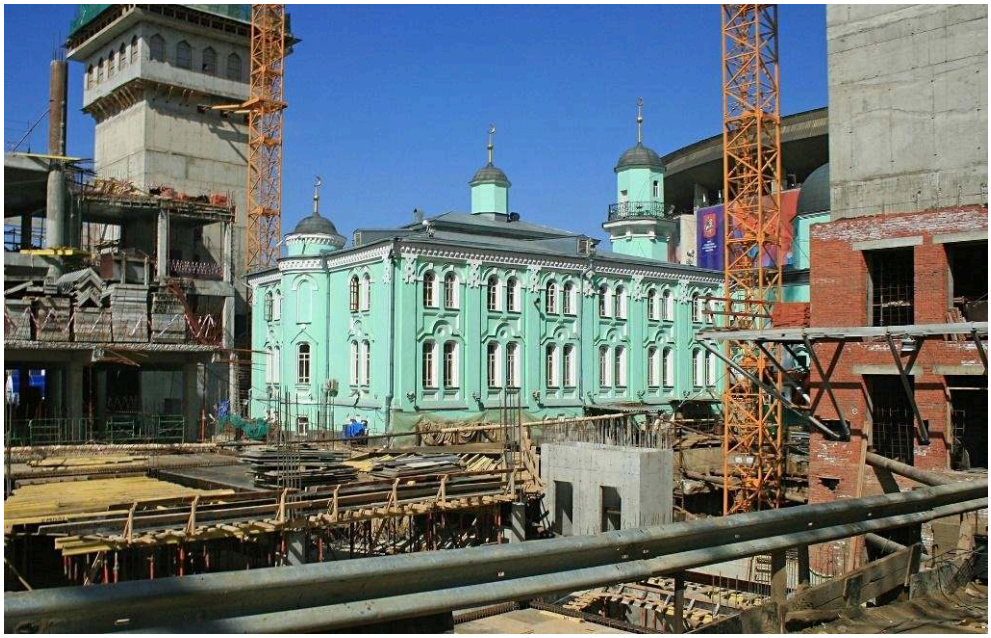
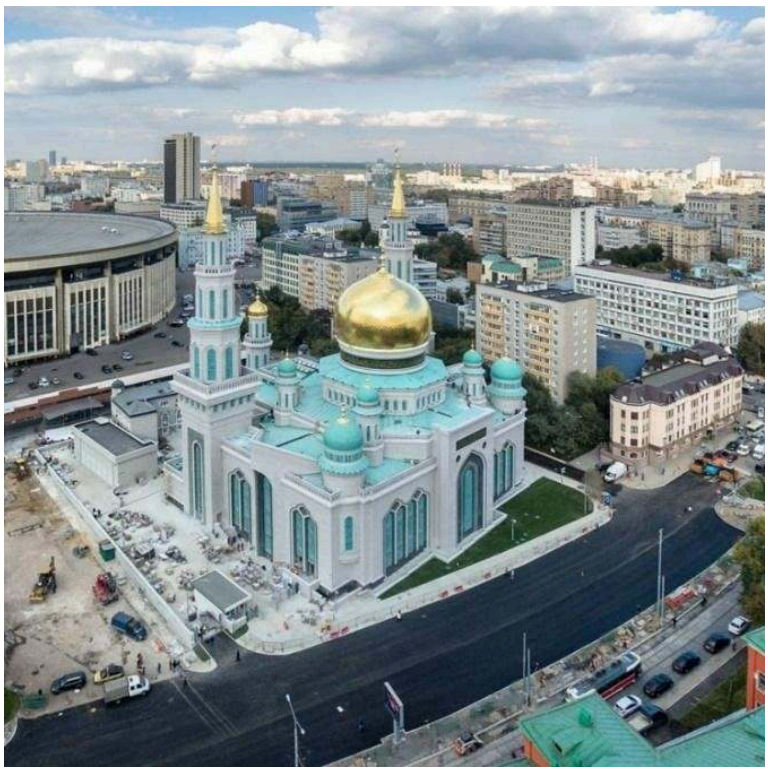
Update on trans-acting matters

1 On 1 December 2014, V. Putin was driven in an armored limousine to the president's palace in Ankara, where R.T. Erdoğan gave him the grand tour of the huge neo-Ottoman building. Comprising over 1000 rooms, the White Palace has been dubbed "Ak Saray" by both the press and the opposition. Differences of opinion between the two heads of state were vigorous and many (from the occupation of Crimea to the Syrian issue). But potential conflicts were tempered by shared interests (in particular energy cooperation) and the rejection of a Western domination denounced by both parties. On 23 September 2015, it was R.T. Erdoğan's turn to pay a visit to his Russian counterpart. In Moscow, he joined Mahmud Abbas in inaugurating an imposing mosque (46m high with a dome 27m in diameter and costing $170 m). It is the largest mosque in a city counting no fewer than two million Muslims. The mosque stands on the site of an earlier building demolished in 2011 by (a particularly controversial) decision of the Russian religious authorities. In their respective speeches, Putin and Erdoğan articulated the issues of cultural cooperation, protection of Islam and the struggle for peace. For Putin, this meant fighting terrorism – on the part of DAESH, enemy of the military-backed Syrian regime; while for Erdoğan, it meant the PKK and the threat it posed to the Turkish state. What was depicted by the press of the countries involved as the outcome of a Eurasian collaboration (Erdoğan used the term "Avrasy"), financially underpinned by several partnered Muslim countries or governments (Turkey, Kazakhstan, the Palestinian Authority), refers to interlacing "trans-actions", "transfaires" in the French literature, which we will for the time being define as the "technical and symbolic instruments produced and reproduced by circulation" involved in "processes of the translation and co-production of the normative and material vectors of political action" (Transfaire 2012)





The cathedral-mosque of Moscow, old and new versions

"Historical Moscow Cathedral Mosque to Re-open", *Islamic Voice*, 15 September 2015 (http://islamicvoice.com/historical-moscow-cathedral-mosque-to-re-open/); "ISIL's ideology is based on lies and perversion of Islam, says Putin", *Ecumenical News*, 23 September 2015 (URL : http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/isils-ideology-is-based-on-lies-and-perversion-of-islam-says-putin-34001; consulted 15 October 2015).

2 Unpacking this example: a mosque built in 1904 with the aid of a Tatar philanthropist-merchant, Salikh Yerzin, was replaced by an edifice financed in part by Süleyman Kerimov, a Lezghian oligarch whose wealth stems from an energy resource at the heart of a Russian-Turkish strategic relationship: natural gas. This is a multi-facetted trans-action, or "transfaire". First of all, it can be seen as a trans-action involving a religious

space: by its very name, the new "cathedral mosque" symbolizes the recruitment of Orthodox religious ideology in the defense of a Russian Islam subservient to the State and the installation of the Islamic community in Moscow's urban space: like the *ulu camii* ("great mosque" in Turkish), the "sobornaia metchet" (ДЖУМА-МЕЧЕТЬ; АРАБ. *al-jumʿa* — СОБРАНИЕ *al-masjid* — МЕЧЕТЬ) subsumes the notions of centrality and community.[2] Secondly, it is an architectural trans-action: in the place of a neo-Byzantine building (Figure 1, top) now stands an "architectural mishmash", to quote one American observer (MacFarquhar 2015), composed of gray-green Canadian marble, elements borrowed from the Turkish Islamic tradition, Russian ornamental references, a minaret modeled on a Kremlin tower, while it is topped with a golden dome in tribute to those found on several Moscow churches (Figure 1, bottom). Thirdly, an institutional trans-action: a mosque built in the context of a Czarist Russian policy of unilateral domination of the Tatar minorities, in continuation of Catherine the Great's project for the institutionalization of the Muslim religion, gives way to a mosque constructed in the context of a religious partnership between Russia and Turkey. In the case of Russia, this involves the Central Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia – the largest Russian Muslim organization – and the Russian Council of Muftis. While for Turkey, this means the Directorate of Religious Affairs and the General Directorate of Pious Foundations. To place this partnership in context: it follows on the heels of the annexation of Crimea, formerly populated by these same minorities. Fourthly, a cultural trans-action: In his speech, Putin wished all the Muslims gathered for the occasion in front of Europe's largest mosque an excellent Feast of the Sacrifice. He then yielded the microphone to his Turkish counterpart, who, wearing a green tie, invoked the values of Islam and the patronage of Tolstoy. President Erdoğan voiced agreement with the Russian author that "the greatest effort in life is achieving good", before concluding with a resounding "spasibo" (Hacıoğlu 2015). This event, sign of a Post-Ottoman globalization within not only the Russian national territory but also a Eurasian Muslim religious space, reveals the convergence of several types of trans-actions, comparable to those examined in the present issue, which is itself part of a broader project that seeks to examine the role of the "Ottoman Turkish world in the process of scientific and technical globalization" (Transfaire 2014).

Choice of terms

3 Let us examine the terms involved:

4 "World", not a world-system or a world-economy (Braudel raises the question again in 1980), but a world characterized by what organizes it; what surrounds it (cf. *The World Around It*, S. Faroqhi, 2004), by what is included in it, much less than what of itself is included in what it is not: The Great Turkish Empire was primarily associated with a set of valued products, carpets and other Turkish items. Although the Sultan sent his emissaries abroad and exported a growing number of raw materials, as an agent of globalization, he remained on the sidelines. This world has always been open or connected: from the earliest times of the dynasty, the Osman and Orhan beys entertained diplomatic and trade relations with neighboring countries. It was a world surrounded by seas, some of which were perceived as actual possessions (for Istanbul, the Black Sea was *mare nostrum*), while others were at times disputed and at times dominated. At the heart of this world was a State which had long imposed either its

own or at least a characteristic brand of logic: war abroad and taxes at home – both inspired by the same policy of expansion: the military state was also a fiscal state.

5 This world changed as it shrank in the wake of military defeats and the ensuing loss of territories. As a result, its relationship to the rest of the world changed as well. In these circumstances, the Sublime Porte was compelled to accept other (bilateral) diplomatic approaches: beginning in 1699 with the Treaty of Karlowitz; in 1838 the Treaty of Balta Limani enacting a free-trade agreement; and then the banking systems, the legal codes, the arts and techniques. The second half of the 19th century was an era of imperial whiplash. Within the space of a scant few decades, the Ottoman world became globalized and fell under the dominion of the West. Historians account for this change by compiling inventories of objects and symbols of modernity. The list includes: railroads, the piano, gas lighting, double-entry book keeping, and on and on. The great inventory of borrowings and non-borrowings reflects the pre-occupations of the times: between the 1970s and today, the Empire is described sometimes as penetrated and dominated (informal imperialism), sometimes as modernized (developmentalism) and more recently as connected or globalized (world studies). The actors are identified: foreign powers are indicative of the presence of States (the Eastern Question); then come the intermediary figures, Levantines and transitional subjects which travel the in-between space without which there can be no connection.

6 "Ottoman Turkish": or, as the French sometimes still, no doubt erroneously, say: "Arabo-Muslim". An ethnonym is central to a world and a civilization. But the comparison stops there: The Ottoman State is an Islamic State, but many of its subjects are not Muslim. The term Ottoman Turkish is particular in that it refers to a twofold tri-partition: Ottoman Turkish, as a language, stands chronologically between medieval Ural-Altaic Turkish and the Turkish of the Kemalist revolution; Ottoman Turkish as a modern political regime is caught between a medieval ethnonym (from the Central Asian Turks to the Great Seljuks) and a contemporary ethnonym (the Turks of Turkey). In the past twelve or so years, in the wake of a movement aimed at the re-Ottomanization of both references and symbols, the term "Ottoman Turkish" has undergone a reconfiguration that bears the mark of both nationalism and imperialism – above we mentioned the "White Palace". Furthermore, Turkey is increasingly making its presence felt internationally, well beyond the territorial boundaries defined once and for all by the 1923 treaty of Lausanne.

7 "Scientific and technical globalization": in the history of paradigms, the vocabulary of "globalization" comes at the right time for Ottomanists, advantageously replacing the theme of westernization, which they had been trying to get rid of for some thirty years. The substitution was all the more easily made because the framework was partly the same: globalization is more passive than active, more elitist than socially widespread, more detrimental than beneficial – in fact few historians stress its contributions (Birdal 2010). It is noteworthy that the notion of globalization has always overshadowed that of Europeanization. For the past fifty years, the dominant scientific production has come primarily from America. This production has shored up an identified program of action, namely: economic globalization (Maurel 2009). European authors, on the other hand, deal primarily with the delicate question of Turkey's joining the European Union. Yet in many respects, the globalized Ottoman world was populated by Europeans.

8 From a historiographic standpoint, Ottoman globalization is discussed in terms of modernization. It is targeted and pragmatic: The Sultan's State needed to put an end to

the cycle of defeats. Sciences and techniques were seen as military weapons – that is what mattered. Next came tools and equipment, which concerned a broader section of the population; and finally came the arts and letters. From the mid 19th century, the sciences were characterized by the diffusion of an ideology of progress. They developed but not all to the same degree: medicine more than biology, ethnology more than geology, sociology more than geography.

Historiographic schools

9 We wanted to look at this post-Ottoman world as it relates to another world, to which it is partially tied. For the time being, we will call it the Russian world, even though it is broader than this simple designation. Nevertheless, this is the vantage point we will adopt, that of a French-language historiography based in an institution, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Here until 1995, the Russian world was assigned to the Centre d'études sur l'URSS, l'Europe orientale et le domaine turc (Center for Studies on the USSR, Eastern Europe and the Turkish region). At this time, the Islamic and Ottoman dimensions of the Khanates were only partially covered by Russian and Soviet historiography, and Russian specialists worked alongside Turkologists. Together they attempted to illuminate the realities of the countries bordering the Danube and the Black Sea. Later on, Ottomanists and historians of Russia began to grow apart: each was struggling with continents of archives updated at the turn of the century in Moscow and in Istanbul. Nevertheless, they managed to preserve their dialogue.

10 When the *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* (Journal of Russian and Soviet Studies) became the *Cahiers du Monde russe* (Journal of Russian Studies) in 1993, a subtitle was added which took in a much broader area including Russia, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The expansion indicated by the final term marked the inauguration of an ambitious editorial policy: The journal's Website states that "nearly one third of the articles are devoted to specific regions of the former URSS – the Caucasus, Central Asia, Tatarstan and Crimea".[3]

11 Turkish specialists, on the other hand, bolstered by the reactivation of socio-cultural solidarities in the post-Soviet era and the popularity of a transnational sociology of Sufism, redefined the scope of their discipline as a means of expanding their domains eastward and westward, which gave rise to the CETOBaC (Centre d'études turques, ottomanes, balkaniques et centrasiatiques).[4]

12 Such remodeling blurred the boundaries between specialties even as it redefined the specialists themselves. Russian scholars no longer had to devote themselves exclusively to Russia, while specialists of the Ottoman Empire increasingly dropped the term Turkologist. This shift was reinforced by the fact that, in both Russia and Turkey, historians increasingly recognized specialists of each other's empire.

13 But Russia was not starting from scratch: for the previous two centuries it had been recognized as one of the founders of Turkic philology. Beginning with the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725), it had developed highly effective programs for teaching Oriental languages designed for diplomats and translators posted to Turkey and Iran. From the 1722 translation into Russian of Demetrius Cantemir's Latin *System of the Mohammedan Religion* to the renaissance of Orientalism in Kazan and Moscow in the first half of the 19th century, Russian scholars produced numerous works on Turkey, in

which they refracted the European vision of the decline of the Ottoman Empire (Taki 2011: 322, 350). The 20th century saw the creation of several chairs of Ottoman history: important studies on the Arab and Kurdish regions of the Empire appeared (Kirillina 1999; Conermann, Kemper: 2011); complete bibliographies of printed sources were compiled; the Ottoman manuscripts at the Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies and Moscow's Academy of Sciences were regularly consulted.

14 While the Soviet State strongly reduced its subventions to the Saint Petersburg institution in the late 1980s, it maintained those to the Moscow Academy. There, a new generation, trained in particular at the Institute of Oriental Studies, took a growing interest in the Turkish world, the Khanates and in Sufism. Meyer and Zhukov (2014: 126) estimate that the number of historians working on the Ottoman Empire and on Turkey doubled in the space of 20 years. Alternatively, while the Moscow archives (Foreign Policy archives [AVPRI, AVPRF]) and the State Archives of Ancient Documents (RGADA) opened their doors to specialists from abroad, the Russian scholars working in them continued to publish in Russian for the most part and were therefore were rarely read by their non-Russian colleagues (Krillina 1999: 1). At the Congress of the Turkish History Foundation in 1999, when several historians of the Ottoman Empire presented the historiographical traditions developed in some fifteen countries, no one spoke for the Russian school.[5] No doubt this could be seen as the academic extension of the cultural asymmetry between the two countries.

Empire: What each was for the other

15 Ottomans took only limited interest in the culture of the Russian world: Ibrahim Müteferrika was quite alone when, in his 1730 *Treatise on Tactics*, he urged the Ottomans to learn from the enemy. Only in 1789 did some statesmen encourage the Sultan to model his reforms on those undertaken in Russia. But such voices remained in the minority: the mid-19th-century chronicler, Ahmed Cevdet, dubbed Peter the Great "Peter the mad"; at the same time, in the words of publicists, Russians were pejoratively designated as "Mocsovites" (*Moskof* ; Aksakal, Gasimov 2015 : 46 ; Taki 2011 : 346) (O. Bouquet reviews the use of these designations in the case of cartography) ; meanwhile the young Ottoman Namık Kemal's patriotism was steeped in anti-Russian sentiment. Beginning in the 1880s, however, some intellectuals began looking at Russian poetry and literature with a new eye. The Orientalist Olga Sergeyevna Lebedeva lent her assistance to the translation projects undertaken by, in particular, Mizancı Murad and Gülnar Hanım. But Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1906) ordered that works written in Russian be systematically censured and any suspicious publication burned. Nevertheless, he was obliged to authorize the training of military officers in the Russian language, and, at the end of the 1880s, the Military Academy opened courses for this purpose.[6] Russian, which was taught in several schools in and around Beyoğlu (in Heybeliada, for instance[7]), was spoken for the most part by Caucasian refugees, Armenian and Greek subjects and Orthodox Christians from various ethnic backgrounds. With the exception of a few military attachés, Russian was not widely spoken by the State apparatus: ambassadors in Saint Petersburg used French in their correspondence. And few Ottomans traveled to the "North" – a region almost reluctantly discovered by Celâl Nuri (Ö. Türesay). In 1910 and in 1913, Hilmi Pacha and Mahmud Esad Pacha, respectively, were among the few senior dignitaries to go to Saint

Petersburg, Moscow or Kazan. And even then, their interest in things Russian concerned primarily the past and future of the Muslim populations (Sibgatullina 2014: 177-218): they viewed the steppe and the borderlands as intellectual and practical buttresses for the effective pan-Islamic or emergent pan-Turanic policies; similarly, in the 1930s and1940s, intellectuals and academics would approach the Central-Asian region as Turkologists (M. Toutant).

16 In the final years of the Empire, a new impetus spurred the study of Caucasian and Central-Asian peoples and languages: the new universities recruited numbers of Tatar scholars and intellectuals from Crimea and Kazan – Azeris and Turkestanis – who had fled the Bolshevik conquest of the Caucasus (Ahmet Caferoğlu, at the heart of Z. Gazimov's study) and Central Asia (Zeki Velidi Tolan, discussed by M. Toutant). In the early days of the Republic, a number of Russian-speaking academics figuring among the 1918-1922[8] waves of refugees contributed not only to development of new political sociabilities and practices in the pan-Turkist movement, but also to the activities of Russian institutions (such as the Archeological Institute created at the end of the 19th century) and to the reputation of scientific journals with close ties to European academic institutions (*Türkiyat Mecmuası*, Z. Gasimov). At the same time, several Turkish scholars tracked the Orientalist research produced by their Soviet counterparts (M. Toutant).

17 In the second half of the 20th century, Slavic studies began to appear in the curricula of Istanbul's and Ankara's literature departments. The universities of Hacettepe and Bilkent created chairs of Russian literature and history, which were occupied by specialists with rich and varied linguistic profiles. New studies appeared on the history of Russian Muslims and their settlement in Turkey, and several of these were translated into the Tatar and Azeri languages. The Prime Minister's Archives in Istanbul (BOA) identified and digitized new collections concerning the Khanates.[9] A growing number of theses were devoted to the Russian world – I counted some forty over the last 20 years, half of which make use of primary or secondary sources in Russian.[10]

Archives

18 Today, the translation of Russian authors, such as Danilevski, continues apace, making up for lost time. It is hard to imagine that, in 1912, *Anna Karenina* was translated into Turkish from the available French version (Aykut 2006: 11). Even today writings of communist Russian authors, including Lenin, are translated from the English or French versions (Aksakal; Gasimov 2015: 58).

19 Cultural transfers have picked up between second- or third-generation Tatar scholars and academics from Azerbaijan over the past twenty years. For several of these, the opening of official archives has not gone un-noticed. Until the early 1990s, only an incomplete list of the collections concerning the Ottoman Empire identified by several archival centers of the Russian federation were listed in Russian-language guides. In recent decades, however, a new generation of Turkish historians fluent in Russian has bravely undertaken inventories of these sources, in particular the military and naval archives.[11] Several young colleagues working in the AVPRI (the Foreign policy archives of the Russian Empire – closed for the moment) have unearthed maps and sketches unparalleled in archives of the Ottoman empire; these documents throw valuable light on technological development of the Ottoman navy at the end of the 18th century

(Yener 2013: 172-179). At the RGIVA, the same researchers discovered collections that allow them to enrich the history of military conflicts with precise studies on logistics, information services and the transfer of prisoners (Kapıcı, Köremezli 2012 : 137-139 ; Köremezli 2014). Like most foreign scholars, they experience difficulty obtaining photocopies and microfilms, suffer from the closure of several archival collections and, when it comes to those researching the final years of the Empire and the Republic, find themselves refused access to the AVRPF. But the preliminary findings of their research hint at possibilities that would have been unthinkable twenty years ago.

20 Today, a path now lies open for the exchange of ideas between these two schools of historiography in the process of development or reconfiguration, but the possibilities for dialogue are restricted. For questions concerning linguistic competence and consulted archives, Turkey specialists know little about the Russian world, and it seems to me that the converse is partly true as well. The problem becomes even more complicated when it comes to the spaces in-between, such as the Caucasus, which should be considered as a "tri-imperial space, but such is rarely the case (Forestier-Peyrat 2015: 11). This is not all bad, however: No historian can lay claim to having an authoritative argument they might use in their national specialty. The problem has often been posed: "A researcher trained in France undertaking research on a Franco-German subject cannot treat the two sides symmetrically, if only because of the need to master the subtleties of the language and the categories it conveys" (Werner, Zimmermann 2003: 15). This is even more true for a French scholar engaged in research on a Russo-Turkish topic. Nevertheless, in one sense, the impossibility of producing a comparative history of the Empire may encourage pooling different historiographic traditions, leading to a history that is no longer provincial (in the context of each of its domains) but a regional approach in its own right (at the intersection of empires). In this case, given sufficient energy and means, a new generation may then reconnect with the *Russica-Turcica*.

Russia, Turkey: Comparing the comparable

21 This generation would indeed be wrong not to seek the conditions of such a dialogue, given so many objects, closely related subjects and common grounds similarly characterized by the "geographical foundations of history" (Planhol 1968). Peripheries, borders and fronts (the Caucasus caught up in the revolutions of 1905-1906, the First World War and the 1915 Genocide) open and close a world of clear-cut barriers, irregular mountain chains, accessible or isolated valleys, snowbound roads and arid plains: all form a series of terrestrial zones to be taken into account. Not to mention the liquid zones also travelled by the men and women of "moveable empires" (Kasaba 2010): the Black Sea, which can be seen or not as an *alter ego* – in several languages and over a long span of time; and the Mediterranean, which was a "White sea"; the Caspian Sea, controlled by Russia after 1813, but crossed by numerous Iranian pilgrims making their way to Istanbul in the hope of reaching the Red Sea. And everywhere you looked bandits, merchants, nomads.

22 No area of study is out of bounds, providing the reflection is shared around the plurality of space-times, in the continuation of the numerous imperial comparisons undertaken since the beginning of the 21st century – the bibliography is too rich to be cited here.[12] But this is a perilous exercise: the histories of the Russian and Ottoman

Empires are often connected only by popular representations. Yet in reality, they are governed by a set of logics, parallel to be sure, not only in the 19th century (the emergence of autocratic régimes and modernization of institutions), but also in the 20th century (the "nearly synchronous demises" [Reynolds 2011: 3], the revolutionary tabula rasa, the eradication of the Empire's élites). But these had little reciprocal influence, even though the similarities seem to be self evident, rooted as they are in a modern history that converges at many points. Their geographical proximity shared Roman heritage and enduring geopolitical rivalry are all themes that a priori encourage scholars to assume that Russians and Turks continue to share historical experiences and similar normative productions.

23 Another possibility would be to look to the same sources for similar models – here their relationship with the West immediately comes to mind. It can be said, for instance, that if Russians and Turks learned French, it is because they had "discovered" – an expression used in phenomenological discourse much appreciated by Ottoman scholars in the past century – France, and that the French had thus turned to Russia and Turkey to "translate Asia" for them. In that case, it remains to identify the channels and means through which knowledge and disciplines are acquired; to evaluate the roles played by the nobility (heredity, service, land ownership) or important personages (Turkey did not recognize aristocracies but did produce classes of nobles).[13] For this, we may look to a comparative history of cultural transfers, the risk being to elude, as often happens, the question of the synchronicity of change, as though time-lags between cultures were a foregone conclusion (Aymes 2015a). Such thinking roughly goes: it is logical that Russia adopt Western ways of thought before (and therefore to a greater extent than) the Ottoman Empire from the moment that the Russian reformer czar (Peter the Great) predates his Ottoman alter ego (Mahmud II, 1808-1839) by more than a century and travelled continually throughout Europe in order to nurture the spirit of his reforms, whereas his Ottoman counterpart had only met with European ambassadors in Istanbul.

24 Comparative studies of empire, sometimes termed "imperiology", have amply pointed this out (Lieven 1999): the dissymmetries seem as numerous as they are clear; the differential relationship with the West is accepted; capacity for reform is unequal; and the gap is never bridged. When Peter the Great resolutely took the decision to learn from Europe, his near contemporary, Ahmed III (1703-1730), found himself unable to impose the printing press in Istanbul. When a sultan, Abdülaziz, agreed to make his first official trip to Europe (1867), the czars and their cousins had already had their personal napkin rings in Europe's best hotels for decades. While Nicolas II spoke French like a native, Abdülhamid had to ask for translations in order to read Maurice Leblanc and Gaston Leroux. In the Winter Palace French could be heard everywhere, whereas almost no one spoke it at the Yıldız palace. How could it have been otherwise? Knowledge of languages is a reflection of identity – O. Figes uses it as a metaphor and a sociological indicator in his novel *Natasha's Dance* (2003). The relation the two countries entertain with the West is ontologically different: Peter the Great saw himself as European and Catherine II came from Europe. No sultan ever imagined himself as anything other than Ottoman, nor would he have wanted to be. And the servants of the State resemble their sovereign – it is impossible to dispense with a comparative prosopography of elites. Russian aristocrats, educated in the course of their grand tour of Europe, were unrivaled *born-to-speak-French elites.* Whereas the Turkish pashas were often reminded of their inability to speak another language naturally (what passes for

"naturally natural" often being simply "culturally natural", as Bourdieu often said); since the (un-natural, precisely) pact between Francis I and Suleiman the Magnificent, French had become a permanent reminder of their alliance with "the most important Christian country of all the infernal infidel States" (Barbarossa) (Veinstein 2006: 325). We need to find something else. And to this end, let us return to the simplest, a priori: relations between the two States.

The neighboring Empire.

25 The Ottoman Empire was often at war, crippled by uprisings, ever less victorious in battle: the theme of a *pax ottomana*, cultivated by the neo-Ottoman heirs to the Empire, who turned it into a tool for dominating conquered lands, was an internal issue and as such was often over done. Nevertheless, with regard to the rest of the world, it still contains its share of reality: from the Battle of Lepanto to Bonaparte's Egyptian Expedition, no Western power was able to gain a foothold in the Ottoman territories around the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. It should be added that, while Egypt was a rich province, crucial to the Empire's financial equilibrium and a pivotal piece in its geo-strategy, it was less central to the Empire than were the countries around the Black Sea. Not to mention that it was never Bonaparte's ambition to permanently subjugate the Empire or to take its capital.

26 This side trip through the Mediterranean helps shed some light on the unique position Russia occupied on the Ottoman geo-political chessboard. For the sultan, Russia was never a space to be conquered or dominated but rather a threat to be contained. Initially a remote Moscovite principality, in the 16th century, it set out on a policy of expansion in the North Caucasus. By the end of the 17th century, the "Empire of Russia" extended to the edges of the Ottoman Empire (as depicted on the old maps studied by O. Bouquet). Ottoman cartographers found it useful to draw up maps of the most recent military maneuvers along the Ottoman, Polish and Hungarian borders. The first map published in Istanbul in (1724-1725 (O. Bouquet) focused on the particularly threatened Black Sea zone, the Empire's commercial nerve center and imagined heart of its imperial strategy.

27 Russia and Turkey entertained scientific relations and, on several occasions, collaborated when their interests coincided, including during times of intense conflict (e.g. 1792-1806, Morkva 2010). But Saint Petersburg had their own – radical – geopolitical plan, which was to seize control of the straits, gain access to the warm waters, install Russian Orthodoxy at the heart of Eastern Christianity, ensure the translation of the Holy Land as Holy Russia and vice-versa (as shown in E. Astafieva's study of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society). The bigger the Russian footprint in Iran, going as far as to hold half of the public debt, the more it distanced itself from the Ottoman imperial economy, cut back its importation of wheat from Anatolia and the Balkans, and reduced its investments in the railroads and mines. Why help develop a country when the aim is to cut it in two, one victory at a time? Between 1676 and 1878, the sultan suffered eight major military defeats in the ten wars with czarist Russia: in this light, how could Russia not be their prime enemy? Russia's expansionist policies should come as no surprise. In 1869, Fuad Pacha wrote to the Sultan: "If I had been a Russian statesman, I too would have turned the world upside down in order to capture Istanbul".[14] Such a threat needed to be contained by heightened vigilance and

redoubled diplomatic activity: the Ottoman Empire stepped up consular missions to Russia; in 1900 there were twelve of them, more than to any other destination.[15] Moreover, this network acted as an extension of the pan-Islamic policy pursued by Abdülhamid II in Central Asia.

28 The emergence of steamships put the Russian navy at mere days from Istanbul. Iran, too, bordered on Turkey; but this former enemy, with whom the Sublime Gate had not been at war since 1823, was separated from the capital by vast plateaus, impracticable roads and weeks on foot. Another difference between the two was that the Ottomans were fighting their Savafid rival, which constantly threatened the Turkish territories between the 16th and 17th centuries as well as control of the Shiite populations on the edges of their territories, far from the capital. It was a matter of organizing military campaigns rather than responding to quick raids: the sultan travelled to Tabriz just as he did to Vienna. It was often the sultan who struck the first blow. That is a third difference: in the 18th-19th centuries, it was the czar who initiated hostilities more often than the sultan. To wage or not to wage war: that was the question; and it frightened and paralyzed the sultan's administration on several occasions at the end of the 18th century.

29 While, by virtue of its interpretation of the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca and through the reality of its threats as much as the weight of its symbols, Russia became the protector of Orthodox Christians, for Ottomans Russia was the very figure of an intrusive empire (E. Astafieva, for Jerusalem). In 1783, Catherine the Great bathed in the *mare nostrum*. In 1878, Russia was the first and only power in the history of the Ottoman Empire to arrive within a few kilometers of its historical and political heart. The trauma of the "roads to glory" (to quote the title of R. Bobroff's 2006 book) took new forms under the Republic. In 1946, only the American atomic umbrella kept the Russian navy from crossing the straits. On 9 May 2014, Vladimir Putin alighted at Sebastopol to salute the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea, which he described as a "historical" truth. Ankara immediately joined their NATO partners in condemning the annexation. Turkey's reaction should be seen not only as an indication of the importance of an enduring double historical presence (Ottomans in Crimea, Tatars in Turkey), it also points to the place occupied by the geographical face-off in both Ottoman and Turkish geopolitical imaginaries. In view of the gradient of distance, the analysis needs to integrate the weight of the anamorphoses: in many respects, the Crimean border is closer to Istanbul than once was that of Rumelia.

Transfers, connections and crossings

30 For a long time, Ottoman specialists thought like Turkologists: reading documents in Ottoman Turkish encouraged them to look for the arrival point of advancing modernity. They attempted to reconstruct the reality of a continuous but intermittent transfer of knowledge and technology from the West. Unwittingly they anticipated the "cultural gradient" theses, convinced as they were that the gap between East and West was so great that successful reform was virtually impossible. Today such teleological perspectives are contested by a great number of specialists. Clearly modernity did not lead to Kamalism but to the AKP (Justice and Development Party), whose successive victories demanded to be read according to the analytical grids of modernization/

modernism/modernity (Bouquet 2015). But we also know that the institutional production of knowledge only partially reflects the political aims driving it.

31 Scholars now largely accept this conclusion. But several problems remain:
1/ Cultural transfer means "thinking of circulation as a subsequent step to the local production of 'cultures' ".[16] Transfer is fed by a spatial and temporal lag: X is all the more readily adopted by Y if X already has a long-standing form, and Y has long and severely been lacking in X.
2/ Transfer is always described as based on institutions: e.g. the State council and the Galatasaray High School, the Civil Code of laws and the 1876 Constitution. Or it is tied to the State: it was the pachas who translated or adapted Molière and Shakespeare in the mid 19th century.
3/ Transfer is initially a matter of crossing-over, going over to the other side – the Hungarian converts (Ibrahim Müteferrika) or their French counterparts (Bonneval Pacha) were the introducers of modernity. From the end of the 18th century, such transfers were the result of an initiation experience (a stay in Paris, London or Vienna). Transfer is a one-way street: from point of departure to point of arrival. The attempt to create an Ottoman school in Paris in 1857 ended in failure and led to its closing in 1874. The transfer does not then proceed in the other direction and even less in a triangular movement (Dimitrieva, Espagne 1996).
4/ Of course, the world is more and more connected; but Ottomans connect in place, for reasons that are a priori obvious: Europeans circulating throughout the Empire are more numerous – though not all that numerous – than subjects of the sultan traveling in Europe. If Ottoman bankers set up shop in Vienna or Paris in the second half of the 19th century, they acted less as members of the "brokering empire" than the Ottoman merchants doing business in 16th-century Venice (Rothman 2012). The foreign trade figures, which showed a deficit throughout the 19th century, reflect this reality: for Ottomans, the effects of globalization were primarily centripetal.

Trans-acting matters and figures

32 Faced with the uncertainty stemming from unexpected documentary discoveries, the doxographic reflex of the profession comes out (Boucheron 2009: 16; Aymes 2012). Material has become available that was inaccessible some fifteen years ago (e.g. passports or calling cards). Z. Gasimov explores them here, identifying uses of names that differ with the context of their enunciation, mirroring a "transnational biography navigating between the Russian, Persian and Turkish worlds". His investigation involves the study of the "technical and symbolic instruments that circulation produces and reproduces". The advantage of this approach is the possibility it offers to draw on recent studies of contemporary revolutionary circulation and on the connections between literature and nationalism in the Caucasus (Berberian 2012) as well as to identify various practices of self-representation. The aim is to look at minorities characterized by a (no doubt growing) gap between the reduction of their room for maneuver and the effective impact of the trans-action beyond the imperial domain. The groups (Armenians and Tatars in particular) were clearly identified by the public authorities. Other minorities were less targets of the administration: White Russians arriving from abroad and local White Turks. The best option, of course, would to be not to institutionalize communities more than they actually were (Ottoman

scholars disagree on the use of the notion of "millet"), and to choose one's words calmly while identifying the practices that lead to choosing these words. The best option would also be to avoid looking at the institutional figures through the lens of their institutions, for instance, the university.

33 Let us take the example of the man often described as the greatest living historian of Turkey, Halil İnalcık, whose aura is enhanced by the fact that he has just celebrated his hundredth birthday. And let us consider him as something other than a historian. Let us consider him as a young man, but not as a young Stalin (Montefiore 2007) or a young Atatürk (Gawrych 2013). Let us consider him as a young Tatar. In this exercise, we forget the early signs of the great historian he would become (even if this is the case, it would take a clever person to prove it), who is today an honorary professor at the University of Bilkent in Ankara. We will study him as a man shaped by language and knowledge. We will not think about cultural transfers: in the 1950s, he studied political science in the United States, thus becoming a historian open to the political sciences; from 1974 he taught at the University of Chicago, becoming a historian capable of writing in English, and so on. Which leads us to think about the imperial trans-actions of a man born in 1916, who was only 12 years old when he was forced to change alphabets after having learned a language that was not spoken at home (Çaykara, İnalcık 2005).

34 Next let us take the case of a historian in the following generation: born in 1947, also from a Tatar background, İlber Ortaylı arrived in Turkey when he was a year old. At home in Ankara, he spoke a mixture of three languages ("karışık", as they say in Turkish and as he says himself[17]): Russian and Tatar with his parents and Turkish with visitors. When he was five he was sent to school. There he learned to read and write Turkish. At the age of eleven, he was sent to the Austrian high school in Istanbul. There he learned German, which his father knew. Then for the next ten years, he studied Persian, French, Italian and English. He has not forgotten any of these languages, although his Russian-speaking friends say he speaks Russian a bit like a child, like the child he has in some ways remained. His German is different: he speaks it as the language learned in the classroom and which he subsequently used with Orientalists in Vienna. Currently as a teacher at Galatasaray high school, he usually speaks Turkish but which he sprinkles with all of his other languages, oblivious to whether his interlocutor knows them or not. He speaks all these languages, but in his own way, a bit like an old Ashkenazy uncle may speak a number of languages, but all in Yiddish. He is the permanent site of his own translations.

35 Inalcik and Ortayli are now part of the post-globalized imperial fabric – their Wikipedia articles are constantly being up-dated.[18] But both have a common relationship to empire that, while not being the outcome of Kamalist decisions in one case or of the democratic overtures of the 1950s in the other, vary in their capacity, under the Republic, to translate a tune heard elsewhere. Stamped with a differential historicity, their presence may serve as a compass as we attempt to move beyond the theories of cross-cultural translations.

From transfer to trans-action

36 The present issue deals with the transfer of scientific knowledge: the courses taught by the chair of History of Turkic languages at the University of Istanbul in the 1930s were

the outcome of a culture acquired in Bakou, Berlin and Breslau over the course of the preceding 20 years (Z. Gasimov); at the same time, the grids of interpretation used for Nawâ'î's poetry in Turkey drew on the rich work of Soviet "nawa'ologists" (M. Toutant). But in both cases, the primary issue is to identify points of passage for emic categories (Uzbek and Turkish vocabulary ([M. Toutant], or Ottoman, Turkish and Tatar words [O. Bouquet, Ö. Turesay]) in the literary and scientific domains, and to unpick the processes involved in the construction of ethnic and socio-cultural identities, while examining ways of presenting self and other. Comparison of notions found in travel literature and geographical annotations, for instance "Northern Turks", can help identify cultural or intertextual exchanges between ethnographic imaginary and military instrumentation (Ö. Türesay, O. Bouquet). The approach via trans-acting matters does not necessarily run counter to the question of cultural transfer; it takes a different tack: rather than "presuming that a domain is 'specific' to a region concerned, and drawing a marquetry of incommensurable zones", it proposes to determine the operational tools and methods that transform these spaces and texts. It favors relations over classifications. It identifies spatial "co-productions" rather than national translations (Transfaire 2012). It brings together objects and spaces, both of which are "co-constructed" (Forestier-Peyrat 2015: 13). This can be border spaces (E. Forestier-Peyrat), institutional spaces (M. Toutant), built spaces (E. Astafieva) or names (Z. Gasimov). It can be anything that prompts the creation of tools of appropriation and codes of classification. It can be seen as a form of "methodological materialism" consisting in "always working from a material, documented occurrence and trying to follow it with as few assumptions as possible about those intentions and determinations usually imputed to 'actors' working with this material" (Aymes 2015b). An example may illustrate the difference between the two approaches: we will take the case of the acquisition of part of the very rich library of Nikolay Katanov (1862-1922), eminent Turkologist at the University of Kazan, and its inclusion in the collections of Institute of Turkish Studies (*Türkiyat Enstitüsü*) founded in 1924. These can be approached by looking at the classic sequence of transfers involved (introduction, reception, diffusion); whereas the inventory and classification of the works, establishment of entries for the card catalog, librarians' annotations or comments, consultation of the works by readers, translations and editions can be trans-acting matters.

Trans-imperial, trans-local and trans-areal

37 In preparing this issue, we wanted to create a dialogue between a priori separate traditions (a Central Asian historian in dialogue with a Caucasus specialist; an Ottoman specialist commenting on a paper by a Russia specialist). We were in agreement on one point: the study of trans-imperial forms sheds light on the imperial logics involved. An empire reaches beyond its territorial limits; it imperializes the world around it. When this is already an imperial world or is the target of a rival power's expansion, it becomes the territory of "shattered empires" (Reynolds 2011). This "confrontational" dimension must be taken into account. The close analysis of translations of the same author into Turkish and Russian reveals competing strategies of capture and reappropriation, processes of indigenization at work in literary figures common to both cultures: in this sense, M. Toutant shows how the poet Nawâ'î , considered to e one of the great Uzbek authors by the Soviet authorities, was adopted into the Turkish

culture as one of their own. But what we see as a disputed border can also be a space of cross-over, production and interaction (Forestier-Peyrat 2015).

38 Empires face off. It is understandable that they are all we see, our only prism. But the bilateral level alone does not explain everything: to identify stages of advancement through comparison of Russian and Turkish cartographic practices (O. Bouquet) is to risk neglecting the importance or the influence of another particularly rich cartographic tradition (Hewsen 2001; Galichian 2012, 2013, 2014). Armenian cartography has a better, or at least different, approach to other territories, for instance the Persian Empire, and has no doubt contributed in one way or another to exchanges between the different traditions. Furthermore, the scale of observation chosen changes with the subject under study. As does the attention paid to men and women for example. Those believed to stand on the side of the State, for instance, turn out to be situated in another manner, as the first article in this issue, by E. Forestier-Peyrat, shows in its analysis of consuls in the Caucasian borderland around Kars.

Six studies

39 E. Forestier-Peyrier begins with two observations: first, that research on Russian-Ottoman relations has paid little attention to the role played by borders in these contacts; and second, that the Caucasus, Russia and the Ottoman Empire share a border whose importance cannot be reduced to the geopolitical and military stakes it entails. In a study of the countries neighboring the two empires in their final years, the author has been able to spatialize their interactions by reconstructing the local exchange dynamics, for instance on the occasion of major political events such as the 1905 Russian Revolution. The study also encourages examining the role played by regional actors in producing relations that depend more on a balance than on antagonism between imperial powers. It introduces the issue of time and memory in relations among bordering countries, a central question up to the final moments of the two empires, as shown by the Ottoman occupation of the western Caucasus in 1918. A "transnational, connected history of empires in contact" (Forestier-Peyrat 2015: 11) should also examine the spaces between exchanges and dependences. It should identify the crossovers in each of the spaces of production of the knowledge accumulated and transmitted in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, but which are also connected to the rest of the world. Z. Gasimov follows the transnational biography of a linguist across Bakou, Moscow, Istanbul, Ankara, Kiev, Berlin and Breslaw, as he progressively becomes a polyglot intellectual.

40 Ahmed Caferoğlu (1895/9-1975) is one such figure of the post-imperial era of the 1920s, when Azeris and Turkestanis, Tatars from Crimea and Kazan, were forced to settle in Turkey after the Bolshevik conquest of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Using unpublished documents, Z. Gasimov set out to reconstruct the itinerary of this Azerbaijani activist in exile, trained in linguistics in Germany and a pioneer of Turkology in the 1930s. By the material used (correspondence between colleagues, personal papers, passports and calling cards), this transnational approach to a multi-scale intellectual history proposes to establish a link between cultural transfers and biographical trans-actions. The findings of this monographic study touch on ways in which a linguist with an exceptional background that was nevertheless shared by a post-imperial generation acquired knowledge in the course of his travels through

Soviet Russia, Europe and finally Turkey. But there is more: in Caferoğlu's case, intellectual activity, anti-communist commitment and university work can never be separated. In this sense, intellectual history opens the way to the study of political ideologies. Providing it does not lose sight of the usefulness of a spatialized approach as well. Thinking of the new Kemalist Turkey not only in terms of rupture or continuity with Ottoman political society, but also as connected with migrations from the Russian world, demands differentiation of several contact zones (inter-borderlands, intra-borderland, between-peripheries).

41 At stake in the integration of such figures as Z. Velidi Togan or A. Caferoğlu in the academic sphere is the competition between Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Russia to appropriate literary figures through developing a transnational approach to Turkology. M. Toutant demonstrates this by recalling just how Chaghatay Turkish, the classic language spoken by Turkophones in Central Asia, and the literature that made it famous, was the object of opposing claims in Soviet Uzbekistan and Kemalist Turkey. The case of the poet 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī (1441-1501) reveals two competing logics of reappropriation. The indigenization policy practiced by the Soviet Union transformed 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī into an "Uzbek poet" and made him a symbol of national identity. While in Turkey, scholars motivated by nationalism approached Nawā'ī as a "Turkish poet" and a leading representative of Turkishness. Nevertheless beyond the academic quarrels over the ethnicity of the poet and his language, Turkish academics still relied on the research of their Soviet counterparts until the late 1960s. A transfer of knowledge was at work even in those aspects most marked by Soviet ideology, continuing a history of scientific exchanges that needs to be seen in the context of the geopolitics of modern and contemporary history.

42 O. Bouquet has chosen to use cartography to illustrate this. His study uses a corpus of sixteen maps produced by a Russian geographic society active in the second half of the 19th century. Each of these maps has been annotated and partially translated into Ottoman Turkish, probably by the Ottoman military administration. Based on a comparative approach to the Russian and Turkish schools of cartography, O. Bouquet highlights just how important cartography was as an instrument of political domination and a site of scientific and technical collaboration between Saint Petersburg and Istanbul. This perspective shows how map annotations are revealing of geographical representations as the projection of an Ottoman imaginary on the space of a neighboring empire, a grasp of other and of self, Ottoman-centered perceptions of the Russian and Eurasian space. But it invites another, more recent approach. If cartography was indeed the site of specific cultural transfers, the maps studied in the article should also be analyzed as topographic and toponymic trans-acting matters. They are not only instruments for building standardized codes and indications of Ottoman conceptions of geography, they are also the material outcome of an imperial co-production.

43 But cartography is only one of the tools used to observe "the empire next door". The space of imperial confrontations also obeys a logic in which cultural and religious policies designed to influence the other empire are interwoven. In the second half of the 19th century, a network of learned societies oversaw czarist Russia's programs for expansion into the Middle East. E. Astafieva has chosen to study two of these societies: the Imperial Orthodox Society of Palestine and the Russian Institute of Archeology in Constantinople, as a way of retracing the formation of a new discipline, Russian

Palestinology. In the wake of the developing human and social sciences, scholars and publicists have started to break down the compartementalized and confessionalized perceptions current in 18th- and 19th-century Orientalism. Yet while accompanying the progress made in Byzantine and Oriental studies, they also became the active instruments – seen as complementary but which were in fact in competition – of increased Russian implantation in Palestine. E. Astafieva looks closely at several activities underway in the vicinity of the Holy Sepulcher following the acquisition of land in Jerusalem in the mid 19th century. The study shows how the archeological excavations carried out in the 1880s and the construction in Jerusalem of the Russian Orthodox church, Saint Alexander Nevsky, signaled Russia's appropriation of the major symbols of Christianity and the reconfiguration of Orthodoxy in the Near East.

44 Russia's eastern policy at the time was a challenge the sultan felt compelled to accept. To do this, the Imperial administration under Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) drew up a pan-Islamic plan of action. But the intellectual tools for such an ambition were lacking. Ottoman scholars and journalists were more concerned with deciphering the drivers of European expansion than discovering the vast expanse of the neighboring Empire; they thus were slow to examine the particularities of Czarist Russia, including its school of Turkology, as Ö. Türesay reminds us in his study. Journalist and polygraph Celâl Nuri's *Northern Memories* (*Şimâl Hâtıraları*), published in 1912, is one of the rare narratives about travel in the last days of Czarist Russia. And even then, Celâl Nuri observed the spaces only from the standpoint of an intellectual of his time. This is what makes the text is so interesting. The author describes what he perceives as the deficiencies of an autocratic model, which he compares with features of his own society. His interest in the Empire's Muslims leads him not only to describe the exiled Tatar populations in the Ottoman space but also to write of the "Northern Turks" of both empires. The conceptual framework and the sociological types of his analysis reflect contemporary thinking on the components of Ottoman identity, thus echoing the lively debates between Ottomanists and Turkists at the time. Once again, travel narratives prove to be a particularly fruitful literary genre for anyone seeking to observe spatial and temporal inter-connections and to explore representations of self and other. In the same way as collections of correspondence and other private documents have been examined in the present issue, analysis of travel narratives can be used to retrace processes of identity building and to reflect on historical experiences from a comparative, if not shared, point of view.

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NOTES

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2. My thanks to Elena Astafieva for helping me clarify some of the terminology.

3. http://monderusse.revues.org/4242.

4. Centre d’études turques, ottomanes, balkaniques et centrasiatiques.

5. *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi. Ankara, 4-8 Ekim 1999. Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler* (2002), vol. 1, Ankara, TTK.

6. Among the teaching staff: Ahmet Hamdi, author of a 1894 conversation guide (*Rehber-i mükaleme-i lisan-i rusi*, Istanbul, Artin Asaduryan ; BOA, Y.MTV 113/84) and Ahmed Sedad, translator of a shorter Russian grammar published in 1892 and author of a Russian-Turkish dictionary that appeared in 1909 (Aykug 2006: 20).

7. BOA, DH.MKT 887/38 (7 C 1322) ; DH.MKT 1610/120 (25 B 1306).

8. It is hard to determine the exact number refugees from Russia for this period. Nur Bilge Criss advance the number of 34,000 Russians still living in Istanbul in 1921 (1994: 54).

9. See for example *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kazan* (2005) Istanbul, Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürluğü ; *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kırım Hanlığı* (2013) Istanbul, Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürluğü.

10. https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezSorguSonucYeni.jsp (consulté le 4 novembre 2015).

11. A detailed inventory of the collections in military archives of the institutions hosting them as well as a presentation of Ottoman printed material can be found in the Russian university libraries in Kapıcı ; Köremezli 2012. For naval archives, see Yener 2013.

12. This was already attempted in 2009 in a seminar held at the EHESS in Paris. Researchers working on two interconnected topics were invited to intervene on the Czar and the Sultan; the noble and the *kul*; the second and third Rome; *millet* and *soslovie* (J. Cadiot, O. Bouquet, « Ottomans et Russes, XIXe-XXe siècles : http://enseignements-2009.ehess.fr/2009/ue/966/)

13. For both cases, the reader can refer to Descimon and Haddad 2010.

14. Mehmed Galib 1910: 79. Translated from Ottoman Turkish by the author.

15. In comparison, there were eleven in Greece, nine in Germany, seven in Romania, two in Iran and between one and three in the nine other countries of the diplomatic network.

16. Marc Aymes, 15 April 2015.

17. Interview with the author, 11 November 2015.

18. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/İlber-Ortaylı et http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halil_İnalcik (consulted 18 May 2016).

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